







THE  
S P I R I T  
OF  
CONTRADICTION.

*A NEW COMEDY of Two Acts,*

As it is Acted at the

Theatre-Royal in *Covent-Garden*.

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*Hoc Volo, sic Jubeo, fit pro Ratione Voluntas.* JUVEN.

---

By a Gentleman of *Cambridge*.

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The SECOND EDITION.

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L O N D O N:

Printed for T. LOWNDS in *Fleetstreet*.

M.DCC.LX.

[ Price One Shilling. ]

*Thos. Phillips Esq.<sup>r</sup>*  
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*Lincoln Inn Road*

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# PROLOGUE.

Spoken by Mr. SMITH,

**S**IR, you're invited to an humble Treat;  
 So take short Grace, where there's but little Meat;  
 We crowd the Board with no luxurious Meal;  
 A trifling Dish;—a very Bagatelle:  
 'Tis season'd high; but that's a modish Fault;  
 You'll find it pepper'd—tho' it wants the Salt.  
 No squeamish Stomach will be here oppress'd;  
 These light Repasts all Appetites digest.  
 Criticks, reserve your Rules for pompous Feasts;  
 We treat you as good-natur'd, friendly Guests.  
 Tho' short the Bill of Fare, it sweet will prove;  
 Mirth is the Banquet, and the Desert Love.  
 We'll serve it in.—You're ready, by your Looks;  
 Taste where you please,—but do not curse your Cooks,



# EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs. WARD,

Who plays the Character of Mrs. Partlet.

**B**E Witness all how cruelly I'm us'd,  
 How Patience in poor Women is abus'd!  
 Not Husband, Daughter, Friend, or Servant true;  
 My last Hope, Gentlemen, remains in you,  
 Surely you will not contradict me too.

## E P I L O G U E.

*Ladies, I know you'll take the injur'd part;  
Distress will always reach the tender Heart.*

*Nay, some will surely make the Cause their own;  
There are, I trust, more Partlets here than One.*

*In two short Words all Wisehood's understood;  
In those that do controul,—and those that wou'd.  
Well fare the first; — and let — the humble Fool,  
Despise her Vows, and come to me to School.*

*The Wives are with me; and what Maid, I wonder,  
But hopes, one of these Days, to keep a Husband under.*

*You Husbands that are tittering yonder, Mum;  
You think me copy'd from your Piece at Home.  
Each good-man finds the Character so pat,  
There's no persuading but his Juno sat.*

*Some saucy Cit, or, possibly, some Peer,  
May, by and by, at Supper, say—My Deer,  
Have we, of late, had any Poet here?  
Not so, those Gallery Friends I yonder spy,  
Sitting demurely, with their Partlets by;  
They, at the Comic Scene, wou'd burst with Laughter,  
Did they not fear, poor Souls, that Tragedy'd come after.  
Peace, peace, your Silence we accept as Praise;  
A sleeping Hornet who wou'd wish to raise?  
Pity your Ears shou'd suffer for your Zeal;  
Smile you, who dare not clap,—'twill do as well.  
Grant all one Boon, and spare the Bard's Affliction,  
Let me, alone, possess The Spirit of Contradiction.*



A D I A L O G U E.



## D I A L O G U E.

*Originally designed to be sung by the Two LOVERS.*

*Lov.* **W**HILE my Charmer seem'd unkind,  
What Despair possess'd my Mind!  
How cou'd you, my dearest, so grieve me?

*Har.* When I wept, and vow'd, and pray'd;  
When I wish'd to die a Maid;  
Was you such a Fool to believe me?

*Lov.* Can you marvel at my Pain,  
When your Lips were all Disdain;  
All Hopes to my Passion denying?

*Har.* Had you look'd but in my Eyes,  
You had found the faint Disguise;  
And had seen my fond Heart complying.

*Lov.* How grateful the Harbour, when Tempests have  
toss'd!

*Har.* True Love grows the stronger, the more it is  
cross'd.

*Lov.* } His Cares all over,

*Har.* } May every Lover

*Both.* Of Merit, and Truth, and soft Ardour possess,  
Be as kindly deceiv'd, and as bounteously blest!

His Cares all over,  
May every Lover, &c.

*Dramatis*

## Dramatis Personæ.

### M E N.

<i>Mr. Partlet, a Country Gentleman, Father to Harriet,</i>	}	<i>Mr. Ridout.</i>
<i>Lovewel, an Officer in the Army in Love with Harriet,</i>		<i>Mr. Clarke.</i>
<i>Steer, a Gentleman Grazier, in Love with Harriet,</i>	}	<i>Mr. Dunstall.</i>
<i>Randal, Partlet's Gardiner,</i>		<i>Mr. Shuter.</i>
<i>Ruin, a Lawyer,</i>		<i>Mr. Perry.</i>

### W O M E N.

<i>Mrs. Partlet, Wife to Partlet,</i>	}	<i>Mrs. Ward.</i>
<i>Miss Harriet,</i>		<i>Miss Mowatt.</i>
<i>Betty, their Servant,</i>		<i>Mrs. Pitt.</i>

**S C E N E,** *Partlet's Garden at his Country House.*





# THE SPIRIT of Contradiction.

## ACT I. SCENE I.

### SCENE, Partlet's Garden.

*Enter Randal, vex'd; a Spade in his Hand.*

RANDAL.

PLAGUE, and a double Plague, upon  
all perverse Mistresses, say I! May the  
black Blight take her!—By the Lord  
Harry, a poor Man had better live in Hell,  
than in Zervice; there he is quit for one  
sort of Vexation, here ch'ave a thousand.

*Enter Partlet.*

Part: Hey, hey! What, talking to thyself, Randal!  
Why, what, art thou possess'd, Man?

Rand:

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*Rand.* Truly ch'am, Meister; and with one of the most mischievous zort of Spirits too.

*Part.* Which is that, pr'ythee?

*Rand.* Nay, a vemale one. By the Welkin, a thousand Moles do not make so much waste in the Garden, as one Woman.

*Part.* Why, who is it that has been plaguing thee?

*Rand.* Who, she who plagues every body, and herself too. Can any body bear to have a Tulip taken vor an Onion?

*Part.* So, my Wife has been with you, I find. Good *Randal*, you must have Patience with her.

*Rand.* Patience! Why, she order'd me, yesterday, to graft a Peach upon a Cabbage-stalk, and said 'twas the *Italian* Method. Shortly she'll expect Colly-vlowers vrom Turnip-zeed, and Parsly to produce Strawberries. I marvel she does not order Nectarines to be zown in Hot-beds, that they may grow as big as Melons.

*Part.* 'Tis her way; but you must bear with her Humour.

*Rand.* Oons, Zir, who can bear with zuch Contradictions?

*Part.* Contradiction is natural to her, *Randal*; she contradicts me, and all of us.

*Rand.* Marry, it may be natural to contradict you, because you are her Husband; but zure, Zir, it cannot be natural to contradict Nature.

*Part.* It was merely in contradiction to her Friends, that, about twenty Years ago, I got possession of her Hand; and then, in contradiction to me, she, the same Night, deny'd me that of her Person,

*Rand.* Bless us! you did prevail tho'.

*Part.* Ay, by Contradiction, or I must else have gone without her. I pretended, on the sudden, a most violent Antipathy, and made a sham Vow never to touch her while I breath'd; she understood this, and in pure spite came to bed to me.

*Rand.* Laud, what a Spirit she has!—And yet, Meister, if you were to exert the Husband a little—

*Part.*



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*Part.* Why, *Randal*, I love my Wife: Her only Satisfaction is to do every thing directly contrary to mine; and I indulge her in her Humour for Peace sake; otherwise, she is both prudent and virtuous.

*Rand.* In troth, Zir, you are zafe enough, upon that zcore. She is too much a Wasp vor the Vlies to follow her.

*Part.* Well, well, no more of this. I came hither, *Randal*, to consult thee upon a very weighty affair. I have, of late, approv'd thy Judgment in several Particulars, and intend to make thee my Confident.

*Rand.* Why, Meister, all my Knowledge does not consist in planting Cabbages. Che had all my Catechism by heart bevore che was zixteen. And but that my Uncle the Parson, one *Lent*, took zurfeit and dy'd, he had promis'd to make me a great Scholard.

*Part.* Why, thou may'st be one yet. Thou wilt not be the first Philosopher that has come out of a Garden.

*Rand.* True, Meister! But what is your weighty Affair with me?

*Part.* Why, it is concerning my Daughter. I think she is now turn'd of Eighteen.

*Rand.* Ay, and a zweet Posey she is, vor the best Gentleman in the Land to wear next his Heart.

*Part.* The Girl is passable enough. She is my only Child, and I have a mind to see her well married.

*Rand.* It is an holy Purpose, and che dare zay, Miss *Harriet* will join in it.

*Part.* The poor Thing, is all Obedience. The only Difficulty will be in the gaining of my Wife's Consent.

*Rand.* You are right there, vaith Meister: Vor, if Madam takes it in her Head, that you are for planting your Daughter into the Bed of Matrimony, she will be for stocking her up, and letting her die in Virginity.

*Part.* That's my Fear. You have heard, perhaps, that I have had a Propofal from two Parties. The one is a Gentleman of the Army, every way worthy of her, I confess, but whose Fortune is in Expectancy; the other is

B

our

our Neighbour *Steer*, the *Grazier*, not quite so young indeed, nor so well-bred as the other, but exceeding wealthy.

*Rand.* In troth, *Meister*, my Choice should go along with the Acres : My young *Mistress* is not worth a Vigvor a long March.

*Part.* Why, that is my Choice too. The first can settle no Land but what lies in the Field of Honour ; 'tis an Estate of a precarious Tenure.

*Rand.* Ay, believe me, a Vield of Clover is worth a hundred of it.——But who is that turning out of the *Vilbert Walk* ?

*Part.* Zooks, 'tis my Wife !——I'll step into yon *Arbour* ; and, d'you hear, *Randal*, make up your Quarrel with her on any Terms ; for I have great need of thee at this time. [Exit.

*Rand.* Ch'il do my best Endeavour.

[Grates his Spade, and sings.

*A Gard'ner is a noble Trade ;*

*No Arms so ancient as the Spade :*

*Tho' Kings, with Titles, make a Stir,*

*Their Grandfire was a Gardener.*

Enter *Mrs. Partlet*.

*Mrs. Part.* Cease this Merriment, pray. Less Noise, and more Work, would speak you a better Servant. Was not that my Husband you were talking to just now ?

*Rand.* Yes, Madam. Che was asking my *Meister* a few Questions.

*Mrs. Part.* Questions ! What bus'ness have you to ask Questions, or he to answer them ? I thought I had told you, it was from me only you were to take Directions. But you are a very, a very Hypocrite, Sirrah ! What, you have been wheedling and colloquing with him, have you ! You have taken him for your Protector ! But you shall both

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both find your Mistakes. Out of my Doors you shall go, the Moment your Time's up.

*Rand.* I bezeech you, Madam——

*Mrs. Part.* Yes, yes, you lay your wife Heads together to thwart and contradict me: You are his Adviser, his Counsellor, forsooth. He said the other Day that his Gardener had good Notions. A fine Age, truly, when such Fellows as you shall pretend to have Notions!

*Rand.* Che only beg, Madam ——

*Mrs. Part.* Your begging will be in vain; for I am resolv'd you shall go. Nay, I know not, what hinders me from turning you away this very Instant.

*Rand.* Why, that's my Request to you, Madam; if you wou'd but hear a body.

*Mrs. Part.* And what is your Request, I pray?

*Rand.* That you wou'd be pleased to discharge me this Instant. My Lady *Ever-green* wants a Gard'ner, and has sent this Morning to hire me, and Meister has given his Consent to let me go.

*Mrs. Part.* Your Master has given his Consent to let you go! Fine Doings, truly! And so I am to be left without a Gardener! Was ever Patience so abus'd! But you shall none of you have your Wills. I say you shall not go this Week: Nay, perhaps you shall not go at all, since you are so hasty.

*Rand.* Madam, my Lady *Ever-green* will give me vorty Shillings a Year more.

*Mrs. Part.* Well, and are not my forty Shillings a Year as good as my Lady *Ever-green's*?

*Rand.* Yes, Madam: But then your Temper, an't please you——

*Mrs. Part.* Bless me! I am a terrible Bugbear! Every body harping upon my Temper; when, I vow to Heaven, there is not so mild, or so reasonable a Person in the whole Country.

*Rand.* But what every body zays, Madam——

*Mrs. Part.* Every body is a Liar, and none but Fools believe every body. But no more; you shall stay at least till my Daughter's Marriage is over.



*Rand.* And is Miss *Harriet* to be married zoon?

*Mrs. Part.* What's that to you? May be, ay; May be, no; just as I shall think proper. Pray what is your Judgment upon the matter?

*Rand.* My Judgment, you know, Madam, you never regarded. If che zet any thing in the Zun, you always move it into the Zhade.

*Mrs. Part.* Come, come, your Opinion and my Husband's, I suppose, are the same. Which of the two Parties has his Voice?

*Rand.* Madam, there wants a new Handle to the Scythe.

*Mrs. Part.* Answer me, I say, to my Question.

*Rand.* Ods my Life! how forgetful I am! You order'd the upper Ground to be zown with Parsnips; ch'il go and prepare it this Instant. [Exit.

*Mrs. Part.* This is a secret and a subtil Knave! My Husband has certainly made his Choice, and, if possible, I must discover which Way he is inclin'd. My Daughter too, I suppose, has fettled her foolish Affection. But I'll balk 'em both, or I'm not *Mrs. Partlet*.

*Enter Harriet and Betty.*

Oh, are you come, Daughter!—Walk off, Minx. We don't want your Company. [Exit Betty.

*Har.* Pray, Madam, what is your Pleasure with me, this Morning?

*Mrs. Part.* When you have done your prating, Daughter, I'll tell you.

*Har.* I wait your Commands, Madam.

*Mrs. Part.* Why, I must tell you then, that I am much deceiv'd in you: I took you to be of a meek, plain-meaning Temper, like my own; but I find you to be a sly dissembling Hussy, Your Father's Spirit, exactly!

*Har.* Pray, Madam, let me know in what I have offended?

*Mrs. Part.* Nay, 'tis my Fault; I am only too good and too indulgent, that's all: But I'll put it to you for the last Time. Be sincere with me, once in your Life,  
and

and tell me, whether you have a mind to be married, or not?

*Har.* I have already told you, Madam, that whilst my Parents are living, I ought to have no Will of my own.

*Mrs. Part.* But you must own you have one, notwithstanding. Lookye, my Dear, all that I seek is your Satisfaction; therefore open your whole Heart to me without Reserve. — Do you think that Matrimony can make a young Woman happy?

*Har.* There are some Women, Madam, who think it the happiest of States; as, indeed, there are others who find it the most miserable.

*Mrs. Part.* Oh! then you utterly disclaim Marriage?

*Har.* I don't say so neither, Madam.

*Mrs. Part.* What do you say then? Pr'ythee explain yourself. You must look upon it as a good or a bad Thing; either to be coveted or avoided.

*Har.* Madam, I neither wish it, nor fear it; 'tis a Subject I have thought but very slightly on. The Arguments for and against seem to me pretty near equal; so that I am as yet wholly indifferent.

*Mrs. Part.* 'Tis that Indifference distracts me, Hussy. You have too much Sense to continue in so foolish a State.

*Har.* I presume, Madam, it is the State a Daughter ought to continue in, that she may submit the more chearfully to a Mother's Determination.

*Mrs. Part.* Suppose I was to determine you a Husband?

*Har.* In such a Case, the Reasons for Marriage would appear to me the strongest.

*Mrs. Part.* Why so, pray?

*Har.* Because my Duty to you wou'd oblige me to forget those which are against it.

*Mrs. Part.* What if I were to determine you to remain single?

*Har.* Then, Madam, the Reasons against Marriage, only, shou'd be hearken'd to.

*Mrs.*

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*Mrs. Part.* What Shifts and Evasions are here! Bless me! I shall lose all my Patience! Shall it be said then that I am unable to penetrate your true Inclination?

*Har.* My Inclination, Madam, is to be directed wholly by yours.

*Mrs. Part.* Was there ever such Obstinacy! perpetually contradicting me!

*Har.* Can a blind Submission to your Will be term'd Contradiction?

*Mrs. Part.* Yes, yes; it is, it is! For I wou'd have you have a Will of your own, and you are pleas'd not to have one.

*Har.* But, Madam———

*Mrs. Part.* Oh, I can bear it no longer! Hold your Tongue, do.—Here again it will be said that I am in the wrong, I warrant. But 'tis yours that may be truly call'd a Spirit of Contradiction. I am not able to live under the same Roof with you. Such a Slut as you is a perfect Pestilence in a Family. I'll get rid of you, I am resolv'd. Yes, Miss, I'll marry you this very Day. There are two Offers made, and I'll accept of one of them. Don't think I intend to give you your Choice, no; you shall take him whom I approve of. I'll just step in and talk with your Father. If his Notions are reasonable, and agree with mine, well; if not, I know my Measures. [*Exit.*]

*Har.* Under what Constraint am I forc'd to live! tho' naturally artless and sincere, yet am I oblig'd to counterfeit with all the World. My present Situation requires it; for who can I confide in? Ha, *Lovewel* return'd! Alas, he is one with whom, I confess, I have much ado to dissemble.

*Enter Lovewel.*

I imagin'd you were on your Journey, Mr. *Lovewel*.

*Love.* No, Madam, I am come to tell you, in short, that I am weary of being made a Fool of, and that I am resolv'd not to see *London* till you have finally explain'd yourself to me.

*Har.* Good, angry Sir, what is it discomposes you?

*Love.*



*Love.* Your Behaviour, Madam, has driven me beyond all Patience. Have I not danc'd Attendance after you near two Years, when neither my Love, Prayers, or Intreaties have been able to draw from you one Word upon which I might depend, either for Happiness or Misery? And when I spoke to you of the truest and most violent Passion that ever touch'd the Heart of Man, you hear me with a Calmness and Insensibility, which it is impossible to comprehend.

*Har.* And I wou'd have it still impossible.

*Love.* Surely, Madam, you might discover either Approbation or Dislike. Something from whence I might know my Fate.

*Har.* You ought to know that I am prudent, and nothing farther. The Happiness of my Life depends upon my being, at this time, impenetrable to your Curiosity.

*Love.* Make but that appear, and I shall be satisfied.

*Har.* I thought you already knew that, in consequence of a certain Scheme I have form'd to secure my future Welfare; it is necessary that my Mother, and even my Father, shou'd be in the dark, whether it is you whom I love or another: It is requisite therefore that you also be kept ignorant of my real Affection.

*Love.* Wherefore must I?

*Har.* Because if you were once acquainted with it, my Father, Mother, and every one who observ'd you, would soon be in the Secret.

*Love.* Do you judge me so indiscreet, when all my Happiness is depending?

*Har.* No, but the natural Violence of your Temper wou'd perform the Part of Indiscretion.

*Love.* [*Composedly.*] Believe me, Madam, I know how to moderate that Violence: And I protest to you that one Word of Explanation, one single Word from those dear Lips, shall render me as calm and compos'd as yourself.

*Har.* Suppose that Word was, That I resolv'd never to be yours.

*Love.* [*Passionately.*] Death and Confusion! what do you mean, Madam? By all that's sacred——

*Har.*

*Har.* I perceive, indeed, you are most wonderfully compos'd. Pray, would you be any more so were I to to make a Vow never to be another's?

*Love.* O transporting Thought! My dearest *Harriet*, that would be kind indeed. The blest Idea would banish all Despair, and give new Strength to my declining Hopes; my Joy wou'd be so abundantly full——

*Har.* Yes, so full that it wou'd run over to all you meet. Thus it is, that your extravagant Transports, either of Joy or Despair, would undoubtedly divulge what it is my Business to conceal: For the Moment my Mother cou'd be sure whereon my Happiness was plac'd, she would most certainly overturn it. Admit, therefore, for the present, I keep you wholly ignorant of my Designs.

*Love.* No, ungrateful One, this is too much; for know, that I am not ignorant of your Designs: I have had Information, Madam, that you are this Day to be marry'd to Mr. *Steer*.

*Har.* Perhaps it may be true, what then?

*Love.* It was that brought me hither so suddenly.

*Har.* And let something as suddenly take you back again.

*Love.* I now see thro' all your little Artifices. You know, I am somewhat in your Mother's Favour, and therefore held fair with me lest my Resentment shou'd make use of her to hinder your Marriage.

*Har.* Hinder it, Sir! Indeed I esteem you too gallant a Man, to hinder a Settlement so much to my Advantage.

*Love.* [*Languishingly.*] No, cruel One, you need not fear it. If you can be happier with another I will add to your Joys by bidding you eternally farewell.

*Har.* Lookye, Mr. *Lovevel*, you may traverse my Intentions a little, but if it be true that you have no Place in my Heart, you will never gain one by chagrining me. Do therefore as I advise, be seen to-day by neither my Father or Mother; I even order you not to appear here.



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here. If you have any Regard for me, depart this Instant.

*Love.* You know I must obey you; but if you deceive me, *Harriet*——

*Har.* As I promise nothing, there is no danger of your being deceiv'd.

*I Love.* Unkind *Harriet*! Is it possible?

*Har.* Pray, no more. There's my Father coming! Be gone this Instant; fly, I say. *[Exit Lovewell.]*

*Enter Partlet.*

*Part.* Where are you, Daughter? Come, and rejoice with me, my Girl. I am not able to contain myself, I shall even burst with Joy.

*Har.* May I know the Occasion of it, Sir?

*Part.* The Day is our own, I tell you, the Day is our own! Your Mother and I are agreed, my Girl! and every thing is to be exactly as I wou'd have it.

*Har.* Pardon me, Sir, if I doubt that.

*Part.* 'Tis true, I say, she has been making the Proposal to me herself, and I have feign'd not to approve of it in order to confirm her in her Resolution.

*Har.* Nay, if the Proposal comes from her, the Execution will soon follow.

*Part.* Yes, Child, the great Riches of our Neighbour *Steer* have taken with your Mother as well as with me. In effect, a wealthy Grazier is no such despicable Offer. What if he does not bow quite so genteely as some of your Foplings who frequent your Balls and Assemblies? he is wealthy, my Girl, and I warrant will love thee.

*Har.* Two very engaging Qualities indeed, Sir.

*Part.* His Behaviour is, perhaps, a little more unpolish'd than one wou'd wish it; but then there is no Deceit in him.

*Har.* His Sincerity, Sir, will make amends for that Defect.

*Part.* He is thought, indeed, by some, to want Sense.

*Har.* A very good Circumstance, that, Sir!—For if he is without Sense himself, he won't discover the Want of it in me.

C

*Part.*



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*Part.* Nay, mistake me not, he is no Fool neither. He only wants to be broke of a Custom he has got of talking too much in the Phrase of his Profession. Zooks, here he comes.

*Enter Steer.*

*Steer.* Good-morrow, good-morrow, Neighbour; I cross'd the Meadows this Morning purely to take your Judgment upon my new Wastecoat here. I had it made on purpose to be marry'd in.

*Part.* Why, I think it a most magnificent one.

*Steer.* Ay, is'nt it? I think to wear it on my Wedding-day, and then lay it up, you must know, in case it shou'd come into the King's Head to prick me for Sheriff.

*Part.* It is no bad Contrivance.

*Steer.* Ay, ay, tho' I say it, let *Bat Steer* alone for Contrivance, ha, ha.——I can't help laughing to think what staring there will be in *Smithfield* to see me bedizen'd thus.

*Part.* You are well known there, 'tis like.

*Steer.* Known!——why, I have us'd the *Old Ram*——ay, let me see——'tis now upwards of Twenty Years since I first us'd the *Old Ram*.——Known! why, Man, *Bartholomew Steer* is as well known in *Smithfield* as *Bartholomew's Hospital*.

*Part.* I believe, Sir, my Daughter there, has escap'd your Notice.

*Steer.* No, no, I have cast a Sheep's Eye at her, and will be about her presently: She's a good-like Lass, 'faith,——in right order, and fit to start for the Wedding-Plate. Come hither, my Girl; how long will it be before you and I have a Tumble together.

*Har.* A Tumble, Sir! I don't understand you.

*Part.* Things are not ripe enough yet, Neighbour.

*Steer.* Ripe! Ay, marry, but they be ripe as a Cherry.

*Part.* Ay, but I mean Matters are not agreed upon between us.

*Steer.* No? Well then let's agree them. And, do you hear, Wife, that is to be, in the mean time do you sit your

yourself with a Ring.—Take the biggest, the biggest, you Fool, you.

*Har.* I presume, Sir, there are some previous Ceremonies necessary to be settled, first.

*Steer.* Previous! What's previous?

*Part.* Ay, ay, Neighbour, we must deliberate a little.

*Steer.* Must we? come then, let's deliberate.

*Har.* Well then, and while you are deliberating, Gentlemen, I believe it will be best for me to keep near my Mother, lest she should come and interrupt you.

*Part.* Do so, Girl, and if you meet *Randal* in your Way, tell him I would speak with him.

*Har.* I shall, Sir. ——— [Exit.]

*Steer.* Well, but now, Neighbour, not to lose Time, let us speak to the Affair in hand. What Fortune do you propose to give me, should I accept of your Daughter?

*Part.* Lookye, Mr. *Steer*, whatever Sum I intend to give with her, I expect to have it doubled, and settled upon her Children.

*Steer.* And these are the Conditions?

*Part.* The very Conditions.

*Steer.* Well then, to shew you I hate haggling, give me your Hand, and if I cross it, 'tis a Bargain.

*Part.* There. [Giving his Hand.]

*Steer.* There, 'tis a Bargain. This is our Method in *Smithfield*. I have bought a hundred Head of Cattle in as short a Time.

*Part.* Good, And here comes *Randal*, most opportunely, to be a Witness of it.

*Enter Randal.*

Well, *Randal*, have you consider'd of the Affair I spoke to you of?

*Rand.* Yes, Zir. And I have a Question or two to ask bevore I can give you my Opinion.

*Part.* Ask 'em.

*Rand.* Does this Gentleman love your Daughter?

*Steer.* Hugely.

*Rand.* And does she like him?

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*Steer.* Mightily, mightily.

*Rand.* And are you, Meister, willing?

*Part.* Yes.

*Rand.* And is Mistress willing too?

*Part.* Yes, both willing.

*Rand.* And I am willing.

*Steer.* Why then all Difficulties are remov'd, and there's no more to be said.

*Rand.* Haud ye, haud ye, I say all Difficulties are not remov'd, and there's a great deal more to be said.

*Part.* As, how, pray?

*Rand.* Why, as zoon as Madam comes to understand that you are all of one Opinion, she'll change her's to one directly contrary.

*Part.* I must needs own, that's her Humour exactly.

*Rand.* For Example—Have not you observ'd that the Weather-cock upon the Zummer-house always shifts away from the Wind, zo that to zet it Zouthwest, it must absolutely blow vrom the North-east Corner.

*Part.* Right.

*Rand.* Now I look upon Madam to be, in this Respect, a sort of a Weather-cock, and there's no vixing of her to one zide, but by blowing hard upon her vrom the other. That is to zay, that in order to carry your Point, and make zure of Meister *Steer* vor a Zon-in-law, you must still obstinately insist upon giving your Daughter to Mr. *Lovewel*. And that's my Counsel.

*Part.* And, if we succeed, Mr. Counsellor shall have his Fee.

*Steer.* Ay, Ten Guineas for *Randal* on the Wedding-day.

*Rand.* Stay, there's another thing to be observ'd, or we shall never bring her to her vull Pitch of Contradiction.

*Part.* What's that?

*Rand.* Why, you'll find that Madam will be for signing the Contract; 'tis best to give no Time for Reflection. The Lawyer must be in the Zecret; the Writings ready, only Blanks left vor the Name; and while you prefs



press her hard vor Mr. *Lovewell*, she'll certainly, in pure Contradiction, order the Blanks to be villed up with Mr. *Steer's* Name, and zign the Deed in a Passion.

*Part.* Your Advice is excellent, and shall be follow'd.  
—Let us separate, lest my Wife should find us together.  
—I'll this Instant to the Lawyer, and order him to prepare the Writings, to put our Designs in Execution.  
Bless me, what a strange State is a married one, when a Man has no Way of obtaining his Desires in it but by feigning to shun them!

*Rand.* True. For,

Husbands, like Watermen, must lock and row;  
For crabbed Wives, like Crabs, do backward go.

*End of the First ACT.*

[*Exeunt.*]



T H E

## SPIRIT *of* Contradiction.

### A C T II. S C E N E I.

*Enter RANDAL.*

**F**LESH and Blood is not able to bear this Mistress of mine! For let me toil and labour ever so hard, she is sure to find Fault. Here have I been digging, planting, and watering, till the Sweat ran off my Face, in hopes to please her, and all to no purpose; for whilst I was wiping myself dry, in came Madam, in one of her usual Tantrams,

trams, and cry'd,—So, *Randal*, I am sure to see you stand idling, according to Custom. Then, to prove to her, how I had been flaving to please her, shew'd her what I had been doing; to which she reply'd, in her accustom'd Temper, this is what I wou'd not have had done. And when I inform'd her it was of her own ordering, she flew in a Rage, and cry'd, Let me find you without an Excuse, and hang you. So that the Devil himself can do nought to please her. O' my Conscience, when she's in these perverse Humours, if a Man were to tell her she was a virtuous Woman, she wou'd spit in his Face, and tell him he ly'd.—In this Crisis, came my Master to my Relief, and calling Madam to him, said he had Bus'ness with her; gave me the Nod, as to retire, in Order, I suppose, to put our Plan in Execution, of fixing Mr. *Steer* for his Son-in-law: I took the Hint, and left Madam possess'd with so fiery a Composition, that if Measter has but sufficient Courage, throughly to light her up, which he will certainly do, by proposing Mr. *Lovewel* for his Son-in-law, I don't doubt, but, in pure Contradiction, we shall carry our Point.—Hark! They seem coming this Way. I'll stand aside, and observe 'em.

[Retires.

*Enter Mrs. Partlet, follow'd by Partlet.*

*Mrs. Partlet.* No, Husband, this exceeds all Bounds! Perpetually thwarting and plaguing me! But, since it pleases you, pray go on. But surely 'tis the very height of Obstinacy, to maintain that Mr. *Steer* is not a proper Match for my Daughter.

*Part.* Nay, Wife, I don't deny it; but as your Daughter's Welfare and Happiness is depending, it can be no great Crime in me, to say that I wou'd prefer Mr. *Lovewel* before him.

*Mrs.*

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*Mrs. Part.* Lookye, don't let me hear a Word more about him; Mr. *Lovewel* had not best shew his Face in my House.

*Part.* Consider, Wife, both his Merit and Family.

*Mrs. Part.* What, wou'd you have my Daughter follow the Camp? I tell you, Husband, I am resolv'd.

*Part.* Let me beseech you, my Dear, to indulge me so far as to condescend to me but in this.

*Mrs. Part.* Once more I tell you I am resolv'd; and, as a Proof, to-morrow Morning I'll give my Daughter to Mr. *Steer*.

*Part.* But your Reason, Wife, for this Haste?

*Mrs. Part.* The Reason, Husband, is plain: And to demonstrate to you that I have Reason, I shall only tell you, that it is so because I will have it so. Mr. *Steer* is, I believe, now in the House; and I'll this Instant go and acquaint him with my Resolutions: And do you hear, Husband, I'd have you prepar'd to sign the Articles within this half Hour. [Exit.

*Part.* Well, *Randal*, what say you? Did I play my Part with Dexterity, or not?

*Rand.* Evaith, Zir, I believe this time you'll have your Way; and perhaps 'tis the zeccond in your whole Life.

*Part.* Yes, I think we shall succeed now. Is the Lawyer come?

*Rand.* I'll step and zee, and then come and join the Cry vor Mr. *Lovewel*. She's in right Temper now; and if you don't strike, you deserve to lose the Heat.

[Exit.

*Enter Harriet.*

*Part.* So, Daughter, we have done Miracles, my Girl!

*Har.* I overheard you; I was but in the Arbour, with Mr. *Ruin* the Lawyer, who is just now come, and waits to speak with you.

*Part.* Odso! he is come very opportunely; I must go  
and



and settle Matters with him before your Mother sees him.

[Exit.]

*Har.* So, Things are at last come to the Crisis I expected, and it is high Time to bring my poor Stratagem into Play; and if that fails, good b'ye Happiness for ever! Oh, here comes *Betty*.

*Enter Betty.*

*Well, Betty,* have you got your Lesson perfect?

*Betty.* Yes, Madam, and without much studyings. I think you only want me to lie and dissemble a little.

*Har.* And are you a Proficient in those Arts?

*Betty.* I were upworthy to serve a Lady else.

*Har.* Well, *Betty*, I shall put myself intirely into your Hands.

*Betty.* And, depend upon it, I'll put you into those of Mr. *Lowewell's*.

*Har.* I hope you'll not deceive me.

*Betty.* If I do, Madam, may my Lover deceive me on my Wedding-night! and that's a most fearful Wish, I can tell you, for a Chambermaid's Conscience.

*Har.* Take heed what you promise, for the Proof is at hand. My Mother is coming close here behind us to listen, we must feign not to see her. I shall but just give the Alarm, and leave you, Girl, to fight the Battle.

*Enter Mrs. Partlet, listening.*

*Yes, Betty,* my Mother will, this time, be over-reach'd by us all; and I shall be the happiest young Woman in England. Ha, ha! I must go and laugh a little with my Father about it. Step you in and plait my best Head; and d'ye hear, be sure don't blab! Ha, ha, ha! [Exit.]

*Betty.* Ha, ha! blab! I think not truly. [Turns short on Mrs. Partlet.] Laud, Madam, you so surpris'd a body!

*Mrs. Part.* I am a strange Hobgoblin, sure! If it were one of the Fellows, you had not been surpris'd; I warrant.—What were you tittering at, my Daughter and you?

*Betty.*

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*Betty.* Bless me! Madam, we were not tittering.

*Mrs. Part.* What, a Lye to my Face? Yes, and I'll know the Subject of your Mirth before you and I part. Who is it that is to be over-reach'd, pray? What was my Daughter saying to you before I came?

*Betty.* Saying, Madam—why, Miss was saying, she was saying as how——indeed, Madam, I can't tell what she was saying, not I.——

*Mrs. Part.* Tell me the truth and I'll give you my green Manteau, and forgive you the China Jar you broke yesterday; but if you equivocate, I'll turn you out of the House this Moment.

*Betty.* I should be loth to leave so good a Lady's Service.

*Mrs. Part.* Speak then, and stay in it.

*Betty.* May I depend on't, Madam, that you won't name your Author?

*Mrs. Part.* I promise you, I will not.

*Betty.* I am sure they wou'd poison me, if they knew I betray'd 'em.

*Mrs. Part.* Fear nothing, I tell you.

*Betty.* Are you certain [*Looking about*] we cannot be overheard, Madam?

*Mrs. Part.* 'Tis impossible. Come, I'm upon Thorns till you begin.—What, there is a Conspiracy against me, I suppose.

*Betty.* A very dangerous one, Madam. You were to have been betray'd into a Compliance with my Master's Will and Pleasure.

*Mrs. Part.* O abominable!

*Betty.* Miss *Harriet* and He have join'd with *Randal*, to persuade you of their Aversion to Mr. *Steer*, on purpose to palm him upon you for a Son-in-law by Contradiction.

*Mrs. Part.* Execrable, unheard-of Wickedness! Mr. *Steer*, then, is my Husband's real Choice?

*Betty.* Yes, Madam, my Master has given him his solemn Promise, and Miss *Harriet* says 'tis impossible she should be happy without him.



*Mrs. Part.* They might well talk of over-reaching, truly ! Oh, this was a most fortunate Discovery ! But I'll fit them for it.—Well, Husband and Daughter, I shall shew you a Trick that shall cure you of over-reaching ; and so I was to have been their Dupe, their Fool, their Instrument !

*Betty.* Yes, Madam, my Master said, that this time you should submit to his Decision.

*Mrs. Part.* Submit ! Did he say Submit ! Monstrous, audacious, insupportable Insolence ! O detestable ! Submit ! The Word chokes me, *Betty* ; I am not able to get it down : Get me the Hartshorn ! [*Exit Betty.*] I am besieg'd here in my own House ! beset round, and every one I meet is an Enemy ! Ha, here comes my Husband, my grand Adversary of all. I'll compose myself as well as I can—Submit !

*Enter Partlet and Randal.*

*Rand.* [*Aside to Partlet.*] Chear up Meister ; do you stand to it that you'll have none of *Mr. Steer* for your Son-in-law, you shall find he'll be the only Man impos'd upon you.

*Part.* Wife, I have been seeking you, to talk to you farther about our last Discourse, our Daughter's Marriage ; and as it is an Affair of the utmost Consequence to us all, wherein not only the Happiness of our Child, but our own is concern'd, I think we ought not to be too rash in our Choice.

*Mrs. Part.* Good, wise Husband, I shou'd be glad to know your Sentiments upon the Affair.

*Part.* My Sentiments you have never regarded : At our last Interview you absolutely resolv'd on *Mr. Steer* for our Son-in-law ; and I am to tell you in plain Terms, Madam, that neither I nor my Daughter will have any thing to say to him.

*Mrs. Part.* Pray speak mildly, my Dear, I love Peace and Unity, and shall readily condescend to you, not only in this, but in every thing else that is reasonable.

*Part.*



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*Part.* Lookye, Madam, You may jest, with your Condescensions, as much as you please; but I am in earnest when I tell you, that Mr. *Steer* is one I shall never approve of.

*Mrs. Part.* Believe me, my Dear, when I once more assure you, that your Choice shall determine mine; and as a Proof, I tell you that Mr. *Steer* is already out of my Thoughts.

*Rand.* Resolutely persist in it Meister—the Alarm is not quite wound up yet; it will strike presently.

*Part.* Come, speak plain, Madam, and think me worthy of a serious Answer: No, I am not always to be made a Fool of.

*Mrs. Part.* But why are you angry, my Dear, since I give my Word to do just as you desire? And to shew you my Sincerity, as well as my Submission, I'll go this Instant and forbid Mr. *Steer* from ever setting his Feet within these Doors again. [Exit.

*Part.* [After a Pause.] *Randal!*

*Rand.* Zir!

*Part.* What say'st thou to this, Man?

*Rand.* Nay; let the Moon say, vor she knows best. There's Inchantment in this, Meister.

*Part.* I am afraid it is too real. What the Devil can make her so complying this Morning?

*Rand.* I'll not believe but the Varies have been here.

*Part.* I am strangely unfortunate, that the only time in her Life that she does not contradict me at all, should be to contradict me the most.

*Rand.* To comply zo with your Will, I confess, Zir, is strangely unnatural.

*Part.* So unnatural, that I am all Amazement—but I'll follow her in, and if possible find out the bottom of it. [Exit.

*Rand.* Zo, there's an End of my Plotting and Politicks! —I shall never have my Advice ask'd again, that's certain. Not that I'll give it up neither; for there's so little Dependance on Madam's Word, that it goes and comes like the Sun in April.

*Enter Steer.*

*Steer.* Well, old Sophister; what, Matters go on swimmingly, it seems. The Articles are preparing with-in to be sign'd. I must look out the ten Guineas—there's Comfort for thee, old Boy.

*Rand.* Madam is looking out to give you your Dis-charge—there is Comfort for you, old Boy.

*Steer.* What! she is not so mad, sure, as to refuse me for her Son-in-law?

*Rand.* I'm afraid 'tis too true; strange Changes have happen'd within this half Hour! But Meister is now with her,—I'll step in and listen awhile, and endeavour to bring you a more perfect Account. *[Exit.*

*Steer.* Do so—What, not have this little Gipsy at last!—But if I can't have her, why, I must look out elsewhere; hang it! I have a sort of Kindness for the young Hussey too.—But he that has Coin need not want Kine, as the Saying is—Oh here she comes.

*Enter Harriet.*

So, poor Girl! What, things go ill on thy side, I hear. Thou art in danger of losing me, they say. Troth, I pity thee with all my Heart.

*Har.* Something has fallen out a little unseasonably, Sir.

*Steer.* And thou art griev'd about it, my Girl, Ha? I am very glad on't with all my Heart, 'tis a Proof that thou lov'st me. But come, don't be cast down, don't despair; live in hopes; perhaps thou may'st have me yet.

*Har.* If it is your Desire, there is no Time to be lost; go this Instant to my Mother; press her, importune her, and peremptorily insist upon the Performance of her Promise.—Hah, *Lovewel!* what brings him here?

*Enter Lovewel.*

*Love.* You'll excuse the Abruptness of this Visit, Ma-dam, when I come to assure you that 'tis the last I shall ever make you.

*Har.* If you had spar'd yourself the Trouble of this, I should easily have forgiven it.

*Love.*



*Love.* I know it, false One, for I am at last convinc'd ; that which I have heard to-day ; your Discourse this Morning ; your Affectation to send me away ; the Lawyer whom I have seen here ; in short, all together confirm your Treachery past doubt.——But I intend to keep my Temper——and tell you, You are unworthy every thing but Contempt and Silence.

*Har.* I wou'd willingly be inform'd Sir, on what Pretence you dare insult me thus ? or what Hopes have I ever given you, that you should presume to tak this Liberty ?

*Love.* Had you discourag'd my Addresses, I shou'd, tho' with Pain, have desisted ; but as you rejected them not, I fed my Imagination with the vain Hopes that my Suit was agreeable. Credulous Fool ! thus to-amuse myself, and suffer my Passion to be so deluded, by the artful Wiles of a deceitful Woman.

*Steer.* Harkye, Friend, dost thou call this wooing ?

*Love.* Grant me Patience, Heaven !

*Har.* Lookye, Sir, since you provoke me to speak, cou'd my Father hesitate a Moment between the large Estate of Mr. *Steer*, and your slender Fortune ? And, as for my Part, I cannot but prefer the open easy Temper of this Gentleman, to that serious, passionate Turn of Mind you always appear in. His Jests and Good-humour are infinitely more engaging than your wild frantic Sallies.

*Steer.* Ay, ay, I have always heard that Women love Mirth and good Company ; and tho' the Lot has fallen upon me, lookye, Friend, don't be cast down ; such a pretty Fellow as you need never despair.

*Love.* Lookye, Madam, order your Fool there to be mannerly, or it may chance to cost him a beating.

*Steer.* A beating ! I shou'd be glad to see that, faith ; and if thou dost beat me, I'll forgive thee with all my heart ; and for thy pains, if thou'lt call on me at *Smithfield* on a Market-day, I'll give thee a Beef-Steak and a Bottle into the Bargain. [*Going up to him.*]

*Love.* Oons ! you—

*Har.*



*Har.* [*Interposing.*] Lookye, Mr. *Lovewel*, either keep your Temper, or leave the Place; I have ever told you that I hate passionate People.

*Steer.* Egad, and so do I with all my Heart; I'll ev'n step in to your Father. Pr'ythee, my Dear, get rid of this troublesome Fellow as fast as you can, and then come to us; there's a good Girl! [*Exit.*]

*Love.* Your Proceedings, Madam, appear to me so extravagant, that I cou'd almost suspect you of feigning. Not that I wou'd flatter myself with such a vain Thought. However, if the Presence of Mr. *Steer* might any way constrain you, he is now gone, and you may freely clear yourself.

*Enter Mrs. Partlet, privately.*

*Mrs. Part.* Ha, my Daughter alone with *Lovewel*? [*Aside.*]

*Love.* Either justify yourself, or confess you have wrong'd me. Come, speak, Madam, as we are now alone.

*Har.* [*Observing her Mother.*] Ha! my Mother! — Sir, there was no dissembling in the matter. I shall say the same thing now we are alone, which I said before Mr. *Steer*. My Father is desirous I shou'd accept him for a Husband, and I declare it is the greatest Satisfaction I can receive.

*Love.* This is beyond all Patience to support: But I have done; I'll to your Mother, and let her know, tho' I have hitherto conceal'd my Passion from her, how I have been treated by her ungrateful Daughter. [*Going.*]

*Har.* Yes, go to my Mother, I advise you; and, d'ye hear, tell her how much I hate and despise you.

*Love.* I thank you, Madam; and thus I bid an eternal Adieu to the falsest of her Sex.

*Mrs. Part.* Hold, Mr. *Lovewel*, I have partly heard how you have been treated, and think your Wrongs invite Compassion. I plainly perceive that my Husband and Daughter are combin'd to abuse both you and me. I shall therefore make your Case my own; for, tho' I say it,

it, there is no one conforms to other People's Opinions more than myself.

*Love.* I am obliged to you, Madam, but after the base Usage I have receiv'd from your Daughter, my only Care shall be now to forget her.

*Mrs. Part.* I must confess that I had heretofore no Intention of proposing my Daughter to you, but to demonstrate to you, who are a reasonable Person, that Reason only is the Guide of my Actions, I frankly make you an Offer of her; for, believe me, it will give me an infinite deal of Pleasure to revenge me of my Husband and Daughter; for every body, you must know, conspires to thwart and contradict me, therefore let me intreat your Acceptance—

*Love.* Indeed, Madam, you must excuse me, since your Daughter denies me her Heart, I must refuse her Hand.

*Mrs. Part.* What, do you contradict me too?—Nay, Sir, I will make it so advantageous a Match to you, that you shall be oblig'd to take her whether you will or no.

*Har.* I hope, Madam, you don't mean to engage me against my Will?

*Mrs. Part.* Your Will, my Dear? What, have you forgot already that you ought to have no Will of your own?

*Har.* Alas, Madam, when I said it, there was but little Sincerity in those Words. Why wou'd you go to hinder my Marriage with a Man of Mr. *Steer's* Fortune?

*Mrs. Part.* Hussy, Mr. *Lovewell* has more Fortune than you deserve.

*Har.* Let me live and die a Maid, rather than be join'd to a Man I have an Aversion to.

*Mrs. Part.* Hold your Tongue; I am resolv'd it shall be so.

*Har.* [*Kneels and weeps.*] I conjure you, Madam, not to render my whole Life unhappy.

*Mrs. Part.* Rise, I say, for I am inflexible.

*Har.* For Heaven's sake, Madam, have pity on me.

*Mrs. Part.* Yes, you deserve it, truly. Know that I am acquainted with all your little Subtilties. You wou'd have



have betray'd me, expos'd me to a Compliance with your Father's Will and Pleasure!—But to punish you, Miss, I'll make you *both* sign the very Articles that you had prepar'd together to deceive me; I'll go and order the Blanks instantly to be fill'd up with the Name of *Lovewel*. [Exit.]

*Love.* Stay, Madam—I wou'd not have you imagine I shall ever sign them. No, I wou'd sooner perish than marry your Daughter.

*Har.* I wou'd sooner perish than marry your Daughter!——Bless me! Mr. *Lovewel*, how emphatically you pronounc'd those Words!

*Love.* I pronounc'd them as I meant 'em, Madam.

*Har.* And as, from my Soul, I wish'd 'em; and, to deal sincerely with you, that you shou'd speak them in a Manner to affect my Mother, it was necessary they shou'd come from your Heart. You had never deceiv'd her so well, if you had not been first deceiv'd yourself.

*Love.* Explain your Meaning, pray.

*Har.* Why thus, then. To gain my Mother's Consent to my Wishes, I have been oblig'd to lead my Father also into an Error. He, good Man, has acted naturally in the Affair; and when I found they were one and all for Mr. *Steer*, I made use of *Betty* to acquaint my Mother of it. The Girl has acted her Part to a Miracle. And this is the Reason, that, seeing every body against you, she has thought fit to take your Part, that she may contradict every body. And she wou'd now constrain you to marry me, in order to make you contradict yourself.

*Love.* Dearest *Harriet*, you have put Music into my Heart that will make it dance for my whole Life. Just now I was quite benighted in Despair; but you have, in three words, so dazzled me with Happiness, that I want Faculties to perceive it.

*Har.* I wou'd not have you perceive it, till the Articles are sign'd. I shall dread some indiscreet Transport, that may, perhaps, spoil all. No, Mr. *Lovewel*; I wou'd not have you yet convinc'd that you are dear to me.

*Love.*



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*Love.* [*Transported.*] Enchanting Sounds! O how shall I be worthy of such Goodness! My kindest, dearest, adorable Mistress!

*Har.* Hush, I hear Steps this way. We must by all means continue to dissemble.

*Enter Randal.*

No, Mr. *Lovewel*, don't imagine you shall ever marry me against my Will.

*Rand.* I believe not, vaith, vor it wou'd be with all your Heart, and with all your Zoul. I have long suspected it, and am now convinc'd that all your Quarrels were feign'd, pretended, mere sham Ones, design'd purely to cheat my Mistress; but that she might not be so impos'd on, I have been just letting her into the Secret.

*Har.* Oh, Mr. *Lovewel*; we are ruin'd then for ever!

*Love.* Wretch, what hast thou done?

*Rand.* I can't help it now, vor Madam is coming to undo all her Doings again; and the Reason why I inform'd her, was because Measter *Steer* had promis'd me ten Guineas on his Wedding-Day.

*Love.* Rascal, why did you not ask me fifty?

*Rand.* Nay, nay, it wont zignify now, since Madam knows all.—Nevertheless, if I were to zee that same vifty you mention—

*Har.* What then?

*Rand.* Why then, perhaps, things may not go so bad as you imagine.

*Love.* Here, take my Purse.—And now, good *Randal*—

*Rand.* And now, Zir, to speak Truth, and shame the Devil, Madam knows nought about it. — But that you may not think your Money ill bestow'd, I will say something for you to Madam that shall deserve it; and, luckily, yonder she's coming.

*Enter Mrs. Partlet, Betty following.*

I'm glad your are come to make Peace, Madam; I vound the young Volk here, ju't going to vighung. They did

so wrangle and jangle together, that, vor my part, I thought they had been married already.

*Mrs. Part.* What, Daughter, do you continue obstinate? Lookye, Hussy, you had best conform to your Duty, or I shall send you to your Aunt in *Cumberland*, to watch Geese upon a Common.

*Enter Mr. Steer.*

I thought, Sir, I had given you your Discharge, and forbad your ever coming within these Doors; after which, let me tell you, I look upon it to be a Piece of Insolence to appear here again; therefore, Sir, pray walk out.

*Ster.* Wounds, Woman, I only came to give my Sweetheart a Buss at parting; I hope there's no great harm in that.

*Enter Lawyer.*

*Mrs. Part.* So, Mr. *Ruin*, I am glad you are come; Is every Thing done exactly as I directed?

*Ruin.* Yes, Madam, all is ready for executing.

*Mrs. Part.* Tell *John* to bring a Table, and bid my Husband attend this Moment. [*To Betty.*

*Betty.* Yes, Madam.—My Master is here. [*Exit.*

*Enter Partlet.*

[*A Table brought on. Betty returns.*]

*Part.* Wife, give me leave for the last time, to remonstrate to you—

*Mrs. Part.* Husband, shew no *Airs* here.—Remonstrate! Pray, Sir, who made you a Remonstrator?

*Ruin.* Madam, may I be so bold to speak one Word, while I may do it in time? The young Lady's Concern affects me. I have always observ'd that these forc'd Marriages—

*Mrs. Part.* What, Mr. *Ruin*, are you too against poor Mr. *Lovewell* and me? There wanted only you to make the Opposition complete. Come, give me the Pen. [*She signs.*] Here, *Harriet*, do you sign under me. Don't be refractory.

*Har.*



*Har.* I must sign, since you command me. [*Signs.*] There, Madam—but my Comfort is, you can't make my Father sign.

*Mrs. Part.* That, Child, we shall try. Come, Husband, you who can advise and remonstrate, write your Name here—quickly, you had best.

*Part.* I'll sign for Quietness sake, since it can signify nothing; [*Signs.*] for I am sure you can't force Mr. Lovewell.

*Mrs. Part.* Sir, to oblige you also to join your Hand, I have order'd a Clause here, to confirm to you, over and above the Sum propos'd, a Gift of a thousand Pound at the Birth of the first Child.

*Love.* 'Tis not those Gifts that I covet; but since it will oblige you, Madam, I'll sign. [*Signs.*] Here, Mr. *Ruin*, take the Articles, and depart quickly, lest my Mother-in-law shou'd recant.

*Ruin.* The Deed is irrevocable. [*Exit.*]

*Love.* Now, my Dearest, you are my own, and thus I take possession.

*Har.* O, dear Mr. *Lovewell*, kiss me as much as you please, but pray, don't eat me.

*Mrs. Part.* [*Amaz'd.*] I am all Amazement! What means all this Transport? Does she then really love him at last?

*Rand.* I told you Miss *Harriet* lik'd something polite; but you'll ne'er believe one.

*Betty.* The green Manteau, Madam, I beg leave to remind you of.

*Part.* This sudden unexpected Change, I must confess, surprizes me. My chief Aim was to see my Daughter well provided for, and since I find my Child is pleas'd, I'll e'en be pleas'd too.

*Mrs. Part.* Pleas'd! O Heavens, have I been such a tame, harmless Turtle, as to please a Husband at last! I am betray'd, robb'd, cheated, and abus'd.—But—

*Love.* [*Kneeling with Har.*] Madam, thus low we implore your Pardon for this innocent Deceit; and let Love excuse what Faults have been committed.



[*Mrs. Part.* *Turning away.*] I will never forgive you ; never, never, never.

*Part.* Why, you sign'd voluntarily, Wife ; you was not compell'd, as we were.

*Mrs. Part.* No matter, I'll this Instant to *London* for Advice — I'll be divorc'd from my Husband, I'll never see the Face of my Daughter more ; my Servants shall be sent to *Bridewell*, and the Lawyer shall be put in the Pillory. You have made me mad amongst you, and you shall feel the Effects on't.

*Steer.* Ay, Goody, but curst Cows have short Horns.

*Mr. Part.* Out, Bullock. [*Gives him a Box o' th' Ear.*

[*Exit.*

*Love.* I am concern'd to see my Mother so violent.

*Steer.* By *George*, I am concern'd to feel her so.

*Har.* Be it my Care to appease her: Be it yours, *Mr. Lovewell*, to reward this Girl, to whose Services we, in great part, owe our present Happiness.

*Love.* As *Betty* has made me happy in a Wife, the way to be even with her, is to make her a Fortune for some honest Man that may be worthy of her.

*Steer.* That Care shall be mine, if *Betty* pleases. I came hither for a Wife, and it shall never be said that *Bat Steer* went to Market and could not deal. What say you to the Bargain, Girl? Wilt thou strike me, or not?

*Betty.* The Honour, Sir, is too great to be refus'd.

*Steer.* Why then, touch here, Wench; and when the Parson has conjur'd over us a little, thou shalt find that I know how to tumble a Bed, as well as thou to make one. Give me but fair play, and if thou dost not own thou hast met with a Man to thy mind, I'll give thee leave to plant me a Pair of Horns, that shall reach from *Hicks's-Hall* to *Pye-Corner*.

*Part.* I dare warrant *Betty* proves a good Wife; and since you have thought fit to Match into the Family, Neighbour *Steer*, I insist that the two Weddings be kept together. Here is *Randal* can scrape a little; and egad we'll have a Jubilee.

*Steer.*

## *The Spirit of Contradiction.* 37

*Steer.* Odsflesh, Neighbour *Partlet*, you are a hearty  
Cock, and I accept your Offer. And that our Concert  
may be compleat, I'll summon down the whole Band of  
*White-Chappel* Cleavers. A Nod of mine will fetch 'em.

*Love.* When Contradiction fain would bear the Sway,  
'Tis just and right to baffle all its Play;  
That Social Peace in every House may reign,  
And Love and Merit due Reward obtain.

**F I N I S.**





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